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7th ASEM Summit Beijing, China A New Global Agenda is Urgent Needed

Brussels, 23 October 2008 (ITUC OnLine): Tomorrow leaders from Europe and Asia will meet in Beijing, China, for the 7th ASEM Summit under the overarching theme "Vision and Action: Towards a Win-Win Solution". As the financial crisis is expected to dominate the agenda of the meeting, Asian and European trade unions call upon ASEM Leaders to send the right signal to the world: the time has come for a new global agenda.

ASEM Leaders need to address the deep causes of the meltdown. "If emergency measures are necessary, these are not sufficient. The deregulated financial globalization of the last decades has not only created huge economic instability; it has also been the driver of poverty and unprecedented levels of income inequality. The time has come for world leaders to give a social dimension to globalization", said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

Central to this social dimension is the creation of decent work. The ILO decent work agenda is both the appropriate immediate response to the social consequences of the financial crisis and a policy objective for the long term as well. The creation of decent jobs must urgently become a government objective both at national and international levels.

One pillar of the decent work agenda is the need to secure access to social security for all. This can only be achieved through the design of efficient redistribution policies and progressive fiscal regimes. Another pillar is the concept of social dialogue, an indispensable element of good governance at both the national and international level.

The ASEM Trade Union Summit that took place in Bali last week strongly urged ASEM Labour Ministers to formally involve the social partners in their dialogue and activities. This call was partly heard as in the final declaration of the 2nd ASEM Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting, ASEM Ministers agreed to find "the adequate framework for constructive dialogue with the social partners under the ASEM process".

During the Trade Union Summit, an informal high level consultation with employers and Labour Ministers took place. It was the first time that such a high level meeting was held in the context of ASEM and provided an opportunity for trade unions to warn about the global increase in the number of atypical forms of work such as irregular, casual, independent, informal, part time or fixed term jobs. The great majority of workers in atypical form of employment lack adequate legal and social protection. Unless responsive policies are urgently implemented, this trend will only lead to more inequality and imbalances.

Read the full trade union statement at:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/FINAL_statement_Bali_Oct_2008.8_Oct.final.pdf

Read the ASEM Labour Ministers' Statement at:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20081023092315-Microsoft_Word_-_BALI_DECLARATION_ASEM_AELMC2_FINAL.pdf

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